

Implementing a Welcoming Family Presence Policy: The Role of Security

Security personnel have important expertise and experience in assuring the safety of patients, families, and staff. This expertise and experience will be important to the process of changing the concept of families as “visitors” in a hospital or for specific clinical areas. They should be well represented on planning committees and should play an essential role in planning the change in policy as well as in implementation and ongoing evaluation. The following recommendations outline important considerations for a hospital’s security personnel:

- Hospital leaders convey to all security personnel, through contracts and in person, the vision, values, and behavioral expectations for patient- and family-centered care and the importance of the welcoming family presence policy.
- Security leaders and staff participate in educational sessions about patient- and family-centered care and the welcoming family presence policy. In these sessions, there are opportunities to:
 - Learn directly from patient and family advisors about helpful, supportive security practices and those that are not.
 - Develop skills and confidence in using language and strategies that are welcoming and supportive of patients and families.
 - Learn about privacy and confidentiality and explore myths and misperceptions about HIPAA.
 - Discover the power of signage and its impact on the experience of care.
- Security leaders and staff partner with frontline staff and facilities management in identifying and addressing potential problems and security risks related to the implementation of the welcoming family presence policy.
- Security personnel are provided with training on how to proactively welcome, support, and anticipate the needs of patients and families, especially in emergency and critical care situations.
- Security leaders and staff provide training to frontline staff on how to manage and de-escalate difficult situations, such as threatening, violent, disruptive, self-destructive, and other inappropriate behaviors.
- Security personnel are trained to support families during resuscitation, in end-of-life situations, and in the trauma bay. They always respond when codes are called.
- Security leaders and staff participate in the monitoring, evaluation, and continuous improvement of the welcoming family presence policy.

For more information, tools, and resources about the *Better Together: Partnering with Families* campaign, visit www.ipfcc.org/bettertogether/.

For more information about the role of security and advancing the practice of patient- and family-centered care, see: Spencer, P. (2008). The security case for patient and family centered care. *Journal of Healthcare Protection Management*, 24(2), 1-5 and Spencer, P. (2012). Security’s role in PFCC. *Journal of Healthcare Protection Management*, 28(2), 30-34.